

# Annual Report 2022



**Biodiversity & Environmental  
Education Society**



# Report of the trustees for the year ending 31 December 2022

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**Biodiversity & Environmental  
Education Society**

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES)  
Registered charity in England and Wales - no. 1187828  
10 Redshank Close, Haverhill CB9 0PB, Suffolk, UK  
[www.beeanatureguide.org.uk](http://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk)



# Letter from the Chair

Raising biodiversity and environmental awareness to protect our natural heritage, is what we do at Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES). We launched our first nature guide training course in 2021 and we carried on our work with our very first cohort of participants in Norfolk and Suffolk in 2022. Our team successfully delivered the next steps of our course programme, with learning sessions online and outdoors for our participants, including our nature guide methodology course with a brilliant outdoor session at Knettishall Heath led by the chairman of the British Naturalists' Association (BNA), Steven Rutherford. We organised our first leadership skills sessions in each county where our participants could practice leading a stop or two to the rest of the group in a site they were familiar with. The positive feedback from our participants made us realise how much they enjoyed the sessions and how important these sessions are for those who are not teachers by training and feel less comfortable with speaking to an audience, and so we decided to plan another session in 2023. We are continuously seeking feedback and taking all suggestions on board to improve our course programme.



As  
Chair of the organisation,  
I would like to thank one of our volunteers,  
Laura Benstead for joining us early in the year and  
helping out during the outdoor activities and with other admin  
tasks later on. She has been of great help, interacting with  
our participants, making sure they were happy, providing  
useful and relevant input during the sessions and ensuring  
everything run smoothly. It is thanks to volunteers like  
her that our team can carry on the incredible work they  
are doing to make BEES a success.

I would also like to thank all  
our participants for attending  
and enjoying our sessions, and  
to those who have jumped in and  
planned to lead their very first guided  
walk in 2023 to obtain their BEE a Nature  
Guide certificate. It is their contribution and  
enthusiasm that give sense to BEES and our  
mission to create a network of nature guides and  
ambassadors for nature to raise biodiversity  
and environmental awareness.

**Anneloes Martinsen**



# Our Ethos

## Our Values

### Accessibility

Our course is accessible to all members of the public over the age of 18 regardless of background. Existing knowledge or experience is not necessary, only enthusiasm, interest in the natural world and the willingness to learn. We provide a course programme that is financially accessible.

### Sustainability

We manage our resources effectively and efficiently whilst delivering value to the public. We are a charity that is socially, ethically and environmentally responsible. We value creativity and diversity.

### Quality

We provide a high-quality learning experience based on the most up-to-date scientific evidence and information. We welcome feedback and continuously endeavour to improve the content of our programme and maintain a high educational standard.

### Network and Partnership

We promote trust and bring people and communities together to create a strong network of nature guides and ambassadors for nature. We endeavour to cultivate partnerships and connect with other charities, organisations, community groups, and individuals involved in, and promoting, wildlife and environmental protection, education, and public interest to create an integrated and multidisciplinary network in line with our mission and vision.

### Passion

We are all passionate about nature and are committed to inspiring others to share our passion.

## Our Vision

Our vision is for all people to live in harmony with, and with respect to, all natural environments and the life forms which inhabit them.

We want a world where people are curious about nature and are able to enjoy it, where people are excited to obtain new knowledge, and where all have the opportunity to develop skills to better safeguard nature regardless of circumstance or background.

## Our Mission

To educate the public about all aspects of nature, to raise nature awareness and environmental issues, to give them tools to better protect our natural heritage.





# Reference and administrative details

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES) is a registered charity in England and Wales (registration number: 1187828) since 7th February 2020. It is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO), whose only voting members are its charity trustees – ‘Foundation’ model constitution.

Address: 10 Redshank Close, Haverhill CB9 OPB, Suffolk, UK

Trustee names at the end of 2022:

- Anneloes Martinsen, PhD (Chair)
- Lee Norman Fletcher, PhD, who was appointed indefinitely in the course of 2022
- David Cammaerts, MSc

Website: <https://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk>

Email: [contact@beeandnatureguide.org.uk](mailto:contact@beeandnatureguide.org.uk)

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/BEE.a.nature.guide>



Anneloes Martinsen



Lee Fletcher



David Cammaerts



## Structure, governance, and management

The CIO's governing document was first approved on 7th February 2020 and last amended on 2nd October 2020.

Since mid 2020, BEES is governed by three passionate and dedicated trustees and during the course of 2021 and 2022, BEES could rely on the help of a small team of volunteers. Trustees were selected based on affinity, skills and experience, and passion for our cause. The chair holds a long-term friendship with one of the other trustees sharing the same passion and desire to create a network of nature guides throughout the UK. The relationship between trustees and volunteers within the organisation is genuine, friendly, and positive.

Because the charity is still in its infancy, day-to-day administration, financial planning and reporting were done by the trustees and working meetings were organised on a regular basis to keep track of progress and tasks to perform and deliver our objectives. Decisions during trustees' meetings were made by the quorum (per our governing document, the quorum is two charity trustees, or the number nearest to one third of the total number of charity trustees, whichever is greater, or such larger number as the charity trustees may decide from time to time).



# Objectives and activities in the year

Biodiversity and Environmental Education Society (BEES) is a small charity aiming to grow national awareness and knowledge of nature and environmental issues through adult education: training and supporting all who love and are interested in nature to become skilled nature guides and go on to share their knowledge and enthusiasm with their friends, families, colleagues, and communities.

The objective of BEES is: “For the public benefit, to advance the education of the public in all the aspects of nature and environmental protection” (BEES Governing document).

To do so, we have developed the first low-cost nature guide training course programme in the UK, starting in Suffolk and Norfolk.

The course programme runs over 3 years:

- a first year and a half of theory and practical courses covering in breadth and depth the many facets of the Natural Sciences — from Ecology to Astronomy, Mycology to Earth Sciences, and practical skills in leadership, nature guide methodology, first aid, and navigation (see all of our subjects on the following page)
- a second and third year to practice the participant’s newfound knowledge to foster confidence and leadership skills to lead their own guided walks

Further details about the course programme are available on our website <https://www.beeanatureguide.org.uk/the-course>.

We provide a combination of **online theory** and **outdoor practical sessions**, led by our team of talented teachers, all recruited based on their skills and experience in their relevant fields — these span various backgrounds including academics and researchers, school teachers, naturalist society leaders, professionals, and other community experts.

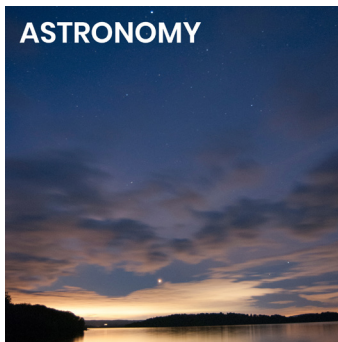
We have developed an online learning platform using Moodle, a well-known educational course management system (CMS). Our Moodle learning environment is designed not only for online teaching sessions but also for self-training, including continuous access to session recordings, digital recreations of our written handbooks and other learning material, for interacting with participants and teachers through our BEEHive forum, and with the ultimate objective to develop a network of ambassadors for nature. During 2022, we worked on the creation of quizzes for each of our course topics for our participants to test their knowledge and skills, and made them available for most of our subjects.

During our outdoor activities, we visit various natural sites across the East of England — these may for example be sites looked after by the Wildlife Trusts, RSPB or Country Parks. Each outdoor session offers the opportunity for participants to learn more about the topics covered during the theoretical stages of learning and for our teachers to illustrate those theoretical concepts with observations made in natural environments.

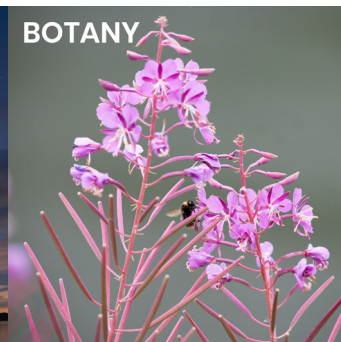


# BEE A Nature Guide - Subjects

ASTRONOMY



BOTANY



BRYOLOGY



CLIMATOLOGY &  
METEOROLOGY



ECOLOGY



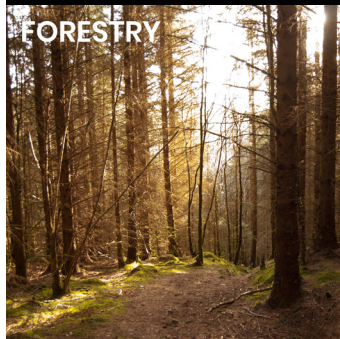
ENTOMOLOGY



FIRST AID



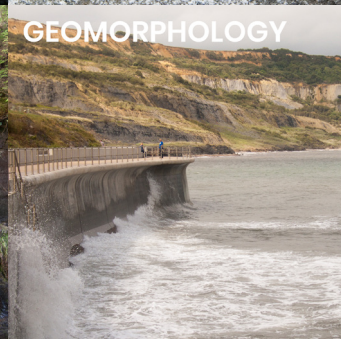
FORESTRY



GEOLOGY



GEOMORPHOLOGY



HERPETOLOGY



HUMAN GEOGRAPHY



HYDROBIOLOGY



LAW & LEGISLATION



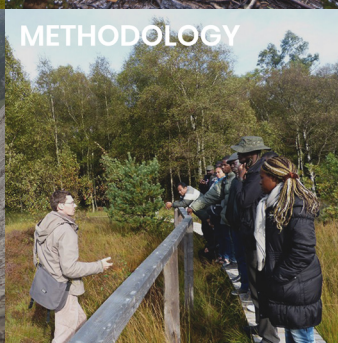
MAMMALOLOGY



MAP READING



METHODOLOGY



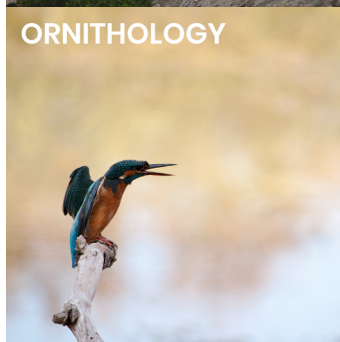
MYCOLOGY



NATURE  
CONSERVATION  
& MANAGEMENT



ORNITHOLOGY



SOIL SCIENCE



SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT





A third major component of our course is to provide our participants with a **handbook for each subject**. The handbooks are written and edited by our trustees and volunteers, with help from the Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique and our expert teachers. We design and publish a printed book for each participant, hand curated by our charity trustees and volunteers and printed using an eco-printer to limit our footprint. We also digitally transform the handbooks so they can be also accessible online through our Moodle learning environment.

We believe that financial circumstance should not be a barrier to environmental education and try to ensure the course is kept as financially accessible as possible. As such, the fee to enrol on the course (currently £320), does not cover the full operating costs of running the programme. The charity relies on fundraising and donations to make up the remainder. No additional charity funds are made from running the course and the fee offers substantial value for money given its breadth and depth, and combination of theoretical and practical training. Our vision is for the course to be able to be delivered free to those of financial hardship so anybody, regardless of their socioeconomic circumstances, may learn.



Sample of our BEES handbooks

We also share knowledge with members of the public by providing articles on some relevant topics about nature on our website and facebook pages so that everyone can be informed.

#### Statement by the charity trustees:

**At the end of 2022, the charity did meet its objectives and complied with its duty to have due regard to guidance on public benefit as published by the Charity Commission.**

The charity enjoys collaborative links with fellow charitable organisations, the British Naturalist's Association and Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique.



Although new to the UK, our training model has been successfully pioneered by our partners in Belgium, the Cercles des Naturalistes de Belgique (CNB) registered charity in Belgium. They have trained about 10,000 ambassadors for nature since 1975. We are excited to bring this training method to the UK and help to develop and support a growing community of nature guides. Our course programme also receives the recommendation and support of the British Naturalist's Association (BNA), a registered charity in the UK since 1905. They are the national body for naturalists in the UK and have instituted graded membership to formally recognise specific levels of knowledge and achievement in the field of natural history to those who study and gain field skills both professionally and recreationally.





## Our achievements and performance in 2022

In 2022, we were still running our first course programme with our very first cohort of participants in both Suffolk and Norfolk. Due to COVID-19, we couldn't deliver all the course topics we had planned in 2021. We therefore delivered the remaining courses in 2022. Again, these were a combination of online and outdoor sessions. Some of our outdoor sessions involved awkward positions such as kneeling on the floor to have a closer look at mosses and lichens.



Looking at mosses (left) and chewing gum lichens (right) during our bryology outdoor session in St Helen's Picnic Site, in Santon Downham

For our nature guide methodology course, we dedicated a full day of in-person indoor theory session and outdoor practical session with our teacher, Steven Rutherford, chairman of the BNA.

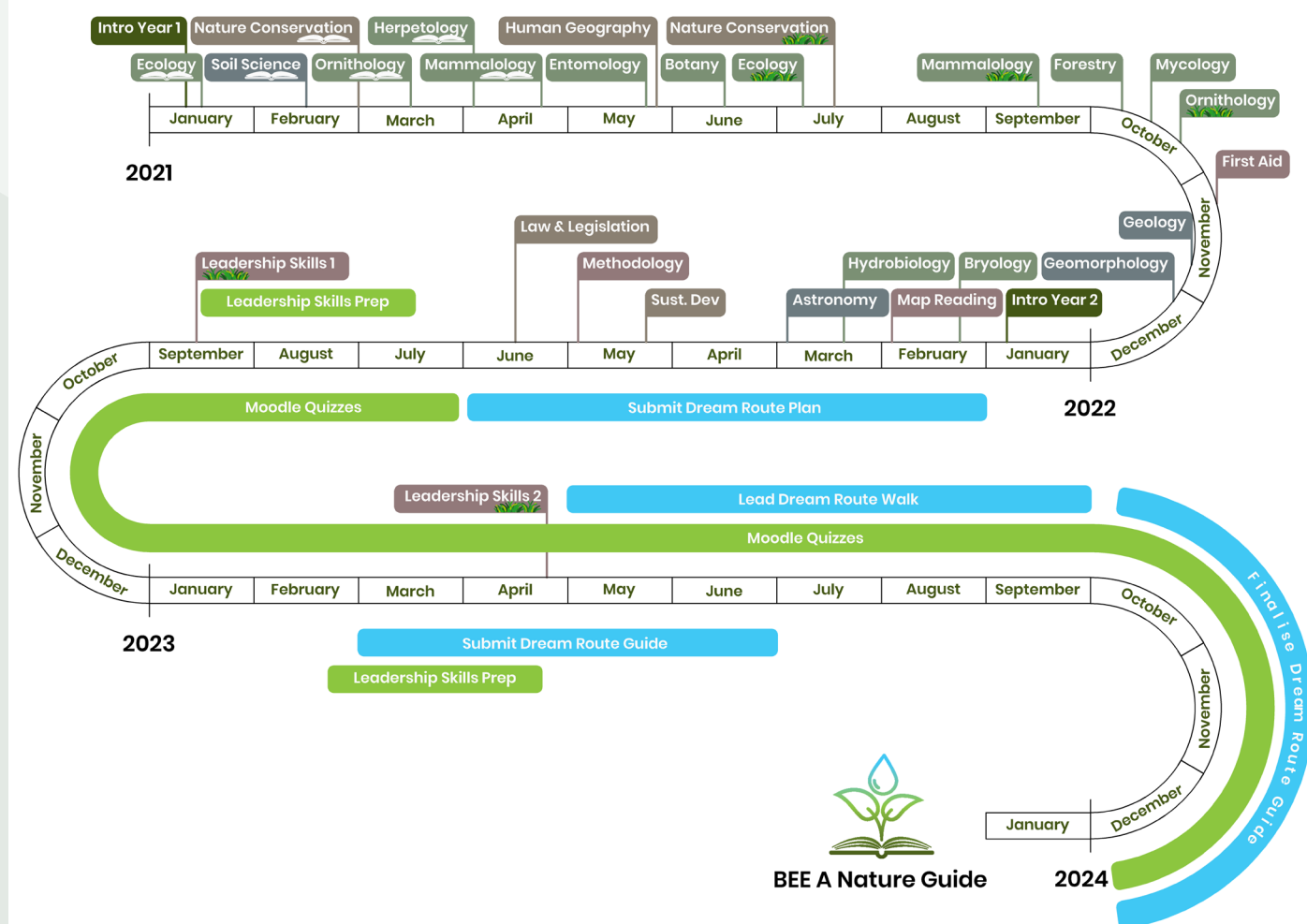


Our nature guide methodology course with indoor theory session at Hopton Village Hall (left) and outdoor practical session at Knettishall Heath (right)

We also organised our first leadership skills sessions in each county. Those sessions were intended for our participants to practice leading a stop along a predefined route, in front of their peers in a friendly and familiar environment. It was an opportunity for them to build up their confidence in talking in front of an audience and in managing time and the group. Our teachers and trustees present on the day provided useful feedback for them to take home.



During 2021 and 2022, our participants learned a lot about nature, biodiversity and environmental issues. They had the opportunity to practice and enjoy sharing their newfound knowledge during our leadership skills sessions. See below for more details about the course programme they followed:



2022 was not just about learning, it was also another fantastic opportunity to meet with our participants and some of our teachers, and to foster and build strong and friendly relationships with everyone. We are working towards the development of our network of ambassadors for nature, and future nature guides that will lead nature walks to raise nature and environmental awareness. The effect of any forms of communication from the BEES ambassadors for nature and nature guides through guided walks, conversations with family and friends or at work, is exponential, and training them can have positive long-term impacts on biodiversity. The more we learn about nature, the better we can protect it.

All trustees, volunteers and teachers worked hard during 2022 to ensure the charity could keep on delivering a course programme of high standards and quality.

We spent all our energy and efforts into the course programme in 2022. We therefore did not have the time to apply for grants in 2022. We will look at diversifying our fundraising strategy in the coming years to generate a more stable base of resources to support the charity.

Because of the size of the charity and despite having looked for more volunteers to help us run the charity and its activities, we were not able to start a second cohort of participants in Suffolk and Norfolk whilst carrying on with our first cohort in both counties. The interest in our BEE a Nature Guide Course programme is however still growing. Since we launched our first training programme, 70 members of the public have registered their interest in our next course programme during the course of 2021 (and after the closing date of our first course programme), and 30 more in 2022, all waiting for further instructions regarding the opening of a second cohort. It shows the necessity and importance of having an accessible course programme about biodiversity and natural history, especially in these times of climate change and urgency of protecting our natural heritage for us and future generations.



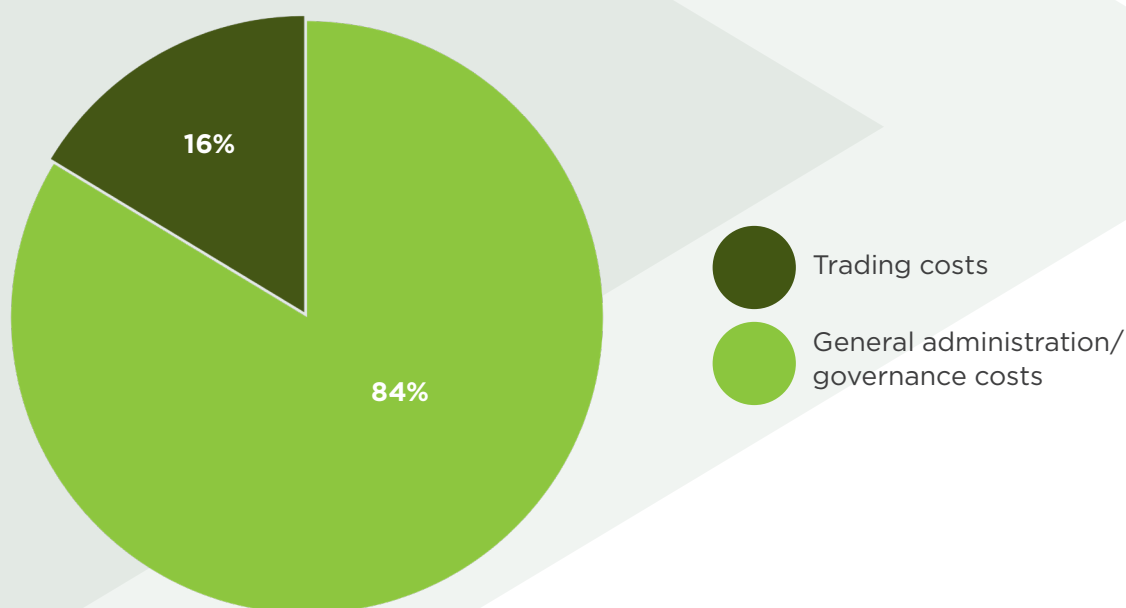
# Financial Review

At the beginning of 2022, we had £3,701 as open balance, income earned mainly from the BEE a Nature Guide course fees in 2021. The charity earned £253 during 2022 thanks to donations from members of the public (see our BEES Receipts and Payments Accounts 2022).

100% of donations received go towards the operating costs of the course, including to help pay for the following:

- Production of course handbooks - these are designed, printed and bound in-house in order to keep costs, and our carbon footprint, as low as possible
- Cost of visiting wildlife sites - many of our outdoor practical sessions take place on land managed by other great organisations such as the Wildlife Trusts or RSPB. Making use of these fantastic sites for our course usually involves paying a fee or making a donation to those organisations
- Equipment costs - to ensure participants get the most out of our sessions we purchase additional resources, such as identification guides, pond dipping/surveying equipment, digital microscopes, binoculars and hand lenses
- First aid training - our first aid course is provided by an external certified first aid training provider, who charge us for this service

We used £1,595 to pay for our trading costs, costs in relation to the delivery of our charitable activities (course material and equipment, and travel expenses), and for our general administration and governance costs (insurance, professional services, office costs, payroll, tax, and the operating costs of our website).



At the end of 2022, we had £2,359 left on the bank account. Of these funds, £1,259 will be used for costs relating to the current course cohort over their third year of the course programme. We are holding the remaining £1,100 as designated funds (for ongoing website server fees, insurance and professional services) and classed by us not as reserve funds.

We have a Reserve Policy in place stating that no funds should be held in reserve until all costs relating to present charity activity (i.e. relating to the current course cohort) are paid. The charity is currently in its infancy and therefore has very little funds to go towards a reserve.

## BEES Receipts and payments accounts 2022

For the Period from: 1/1/2022		To: 31/12/2022	
Receipts	Amount (to nearest £)	Payments	Amount (to nearest £)
Opening balance	£3,701	Trading costs	
Donations from members of the public	£253	Course material	£151
		Equipment	£78
		Travel	£32
		General administration/governance costs	
		Insurance	£179
		Office costs	£104
		Payroll	£707
		Professional services	£144
		Tax	£49
		Website operating costs	£151
<b>Total:</b>	<b>£3,954</b>	<b>Total:</b>	<b>£1,595</b>
<b>Closing balance:</b>	<b>£2,359</b>		





# BEES in numbers in 2022



Running our **1st** nature guide training course in the UK



We operate our course programme in **2** counties – Suffolk and Norfolk



The charity is run by **3** passionate and dedicated trustees



**14** volunteers gave up a bit (or more) of their time to help us raise environmental awareness during the course of 2022



The charity relies on **18** teachers to run the BEE a Nature Guide training course and pass on their knowledge to our participants



**26** participants were registered on the course in Suffolk and Norfolk



**100** members of the public registered their interest in the BEE a Nature Guide course since we launched our first training programme



By the end of 2022 we had **534** followers on facebook



We had **£3,954** in our bank account to deliver our charitable activities



## Looking forward

Our main goal for the moment is to settle and establish the course programme in Suffolk and Norfolk. However, we have long-term aims to expand and cover the whole of the UK. We will work towards developing partnerships and collaborations with other organisations and individuals to create a pool of teachers, venues, and volunteers in other counties necessary to establish and make the course programme accessible to members of the public in other regions of the UK.

Short-term objectives for 2023 are mainly to carry on with delivering our nature guide training course to our first cohort of participants in Suffolk and Norfolk, to make the course programme a success from start to finish. Specifically, in 2023, we will be working on the following priorities:

- Finishing the content of the course material for the remaining subjects
- Preparing, formatting, and printing out the remaining handbooks
- Organising and scheduling another leadership skills session per county
- Improving our online learning platform by adding quizzes for our participants to test their newfound knowledge, but also by creating activities and stimulating the interaction between participants
- Scheduling and attending our first participants' guided walks as part of their final assessment to obtain their BEE a Nature Guide certificate. This also includes reviewing their written guide
- Organising and scheduling the course programme for a second cohort of participants in Suffolk and Norfolk
- Reviewing learning outcomes for our first cohort, and improve where possible by further integrating andragogic principles
- Asking for and receiving feedback from our participants and teachers to continuously improve ourselves and the course programme
- Recruiting skilled volunteers to help the charity develop and meet its long- and short-term objectives. This also includes developing a proper volunteer management policy and selection process
- Working on developing our social visibility and fundraising strategy



Outdoor guided walk led by one of our teachers at Knettishall Heath, Suffolk Wildlife Trust.



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Notes: